AASB’s 2024 Legislative Priorities

On behalf of our member school districts statewide, the AASB Board of Directors has adopted three legislative priorities: Funding, Educators and Students.

Our Mission: The Association of Alaska School Boards advocates for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing quality public education, focused on student achievement, through effective local governance.

Sufficient and Sustainable Public Education Funding

Sufficient, sustainable and stable funding is required to meet Alaska’s obligation to provide quality, public education for every Alaska student. Educating Alaska’s youth is the best strategy for successfully meeting and safeguarding Alaska’s prosperity.

- **Increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA)** – AASB advocates for an increase to the BSA for FY2025 to account for inflation since the last major increase to the BSA in FY2017. From 2011 to 2023, the BSA has only increased by $250 per student (4.4%) while inflation has increased by at least 26% (Anchorage CPI), resulting in crippling staff shortages, school closures, and program eliminations.

- **Incorporate an annual increase in the BSA to account for inflation** – provide by statute, for an annual increase in the BSA that provides some accounting for annual inflation and drives a philosophy of long-term investment in public education.

- **Increase funding for student transportation** – Student transportation funding has remained flat since 2016. Transportation costs have dramatically increased due to inflation and labor shortages. Transportation funding must be increased to keep up with inflation and prevent shifting to the use of school district general funds.

Retention and Recruitment of Teachers, Administrators & Staff

School districts face an unprecedented crisis of retaining and recruiting qualified, effective teachers, administrators, and support staff which seriously hinders providing Alaska students with a quality education.

- **Implement recommendations** - of the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force.

- **Reinstitute a competitive retirement program** - including both defined benefits and defined contributions.

- **Invest in teacher housing** - required for most rural school districts.

- **Grow Alaska teachers and administrators** - work with partners and the University of Alaska to improve and expand teacher training programs, teacher-mentor programs, and alternative certification pathways.

Student Wellness and School Safety

The pandemic has impacted student wellness for every demographic, especially students experiencing poverty or trauma. Violence, neglect, and sexual abuse have increased, resulting in reduced social-emotional well-being and academic achievement.

- **Address student mental health** - Support and fund mental health services for all Alaskan students, including trauma-engaged practices in Alaska schools.

- **Prevent student sexual abuse by school staff** - Support the implementation of policies and training regarding professional boundaries between staff and students.

- **Reduce school and student violence**. Support and fund the needed programs and services.